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ABSTRACT

The research undertaken for producing a "Dictionary of American Regional English" (the DARE project) is reported in this document. Ten spoken and 13 written sources of relevant data are listed, and outlines of the editing and production procedures and of the material to be included are given. Completion date for the dictionary is 1976. (JM)

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FINAL REPORT
Bureau of Research Project No. 2935
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DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN REGIONAL ENGLISH

U.S. Department of
Health, Education, and Welfare

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

CS 202 171

FINAL REPORT

Bureau of Research Project No. 2935
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Professor Frederic G. Cassidy

November 1970

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

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The DARE Project at the End of 1970

The "DARE Project" began officially on July 1, 1965, as a cooperative project supported by the U. S. Office of Education and the University of Wisconsin, and under sponsorship of the American Dialect Society, with Professor Frederic G. Cassidy as Director-Editor. Its purpose is to produce a Dictionary of American Regional English.

This was planned from the beginning in two phases: Phase 1, collecting the necessary materials, and Phase 2, editing them to produce the actual dictionary. The USOE-UW cooperation was to cover Phase 1, 1965-1970. That part has been completed. Phase 2 has now begun, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The target date for completion of the Dictionary is 1976 -- the bicentennial of American Independence -- an appropriate date for the appearance of a long-needed work on American language. The project has been accepted by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

PHASE 1 - What has been accomplished.

In the five years of Phase 1, a massive effort was made to gather as much as possible of the most relevant data on American regional English, both from spoken and written sources.

Spoken Sources

1. DARE Questionairs. A fresh collection has been made of lexical data from native speakers of American English representing 1,002 communities in 50 states. These communities have been chosen as broadly representative of the stable part of the U. S. population both rural and urban. Local informants (INF) in the chosen communities have been interviewed by DARE fieldworkers (FW) between November 1965 and late 1970, using our own questionair (QR), which contains about 1,400 questions covering the chief concerns in the daily life of most people throughout the country.

   In the QR every question is framed exactly and the FWs were instructed to ask each question as framed. This has produced as high a degree of comparability in the responses as it is possible to get: we will be able to correlate differences of usage with geography and with relevant facts about the informants such as age, sex, race, degree of education, occupation, all of

which are stored, with their responses, in our computer file. This mass of data alone, about 2,300,000 items, will furnish a synchronic picture of American language such as has not existed hitherto. (See below, Data Summary.)

2. DARE Tapes. Our FWs have made 1,843 new tape recordings of native speech in every part of the country. These will not only furnish the basis for a picture of contemporary regional American pronunciation (something which does not exist at present in a synchronic form), but thousands of lexical items not covered by the QR.

3. L.A.N.E. Workbooks. From the margins of the workbooks of the Linguistic Atlas of New England we have gathered perhaps 2,000 items that were not put on the L.A.N.E. maps.

4. L.A.N.E. Disks. We are excerpting the 609 disks in the Miles L. Hanley Collection (University of Wisconsin) which record the speech of 386 chiefly elderly people in 1933-34.

5. Other Linguistic Atlas Materials. For Wisconsin we have 50 field records made by F. G. Cassidy in 1940-41. The much larger collection of the Linguistic Atlas of California and Nevada has also been put at our disposal by Professor David Reed, Northwestern University.

6. The Gordon Wilson Collection. A thoroughly digested collection of the usages of 225 local people in the area of Mammoth Cave National Park, collected by direct interview with and without tape recordings over a period of about 30 years by Professor Gordon Wilson of Western Kentucky University. This generous gift adds some 9,000 items to the DARE file.

7. The Joseph S. Hall Collection. A fully annotated collection of the usages of 250 local people in the area of Great Smoky Mountain National Park, collected by direct interview with and without tape recordings over a period of about 35 years by Professor Joseph Sargent Hall of Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California. This generous gift adds some 2,000 items to the DARE file.

8. Tobacco Terms. A comparative collection of tobacco growing terms as used in the 8 major tobacco-growing states, made as a special project for DARE by Professor Mary Ritchie Key, University of California-Irvine, in 1967, by direct interview of more than 50 tobacco farmers, handlers, and dealers. This source adds about 300 items to the file.

9. Coal Miner's Terms. A comparative collection of the occupational terms of coal-miners in the 10 chief coal-mining states, made by Dr. Dennis R. Preston, Ohio State University, in 1967-68, by direct interview. This source adds about 200 items to the DARE file.

10. Miscellaneous. Many smaller collections of local terms, or single items, have been sent in from the most varied sources, or gathered in passing by DARE FWs and others. This adds probably over 5,000 items.

Written Sources

1. Dialect Notes. Published by the American Dialect Society from 1890-1939: 6 volumes. One hundred word-lists and some special studies from 34 states, mostly east of the Mississippi River. These have added perhaps 10,000 items for the file.

2. P.A.D.S. The Publication of the American Dialect Society series (50 issues to date) contains 30 usable word lists and some special studies. This has added about 2,000 items.

3. Current Language Periodicals. Chief of these is American Speech, published since 1925. The first 7 volumes, being unindexed, have been read for inclusion in DARE. The indexes to later volumes have been selectively incorporated in the file. Other publications treated similarly are American Notes and Queries, published since 1962, and Word Study, published since 1925. These should furnish at least 5,000 usable items.

4. Folklore Materials. Though a number of folklore journals have been read (Journal of the American Folklore Society, Western Folklore, Kentucky Folklore, Foxfire, and others) for matters treating regional and local language, DARE has been generously granted full access to the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, directed by Professor Wayland Hand at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Hand's materials will be used for reference and consultation during the editing.

5. Regional American Literature. At least 500 novels, stories, plays, and volumes of poetry not read for DAE or DA and covering the entire united States are being excerpted. This should add at least 25,000 items.

6. Wisconsin English Language Survey. From 1947-52 F. G. Cassidy and A. R. Duckert had a questionair of about 1,800 questions filled out by informants in 50 Wisconsin communities. These should add more than 90,000 items.

7. American Diaries. Thanks to a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, DARE was enabled to excerpt 115 American diaries (not read for DAE or DA) covering the period from 1640-1860. This source has added about 3,500 items to the file, many unrecorded before.

8. Fries Newspaper Clippings. In 1927-28 the late Professor Charles C. Fries made a collection of clippings from 266 newspapers of 48 states including only locally written news, editorials, advertising, etc. This was brought to Madison in 1969 and, with other newspaper sources, should add several thousand items.

9. P.A.D.S. 20 Questionair. The QR published in P.A.D.S. 20 by F. G. Cassidy and A. R. Duckert has been used in at least 6 communities. This source should add at least 10,000 items.

10. Occupational Terms. Professor Miles Hanley left in the ADS Collection about 1935 mimeographed lists of 13,331 terms from 97 occupations. This, with a number of other smaller occupational glossaries, should add at least 14,000 items.

11. Atcheson L. Hench Collection. Professor Atcheson L. Hench, Emeritus, University of Virginia, has passed to DARE his rich collection of American usages made over a forty-year period from newspapers and other publications. This should add 40,000 items.

12. Scientific Names. A large Natural History file has been made which cross-lists in both directions all the folk names for plants, animals, birds, insects, and fish which we have found, with their scientific names and the region or place where the folk names are in use. This unique reference tool will save much time during editing. It should also furnish several thousand items.

13. Miscellaneous. Contributions of all sorts, small single publications, written communications, etc. These should amount to perhaps 5,000 items.

The grand total of items in the file will be more than 2,500,000. By a very tentative estimate, the number of entries in the Dictionary should be over 100,000.

Computer Program. The computer program used by DARE was conceived and set up in 1965 by Dr. Richard Venezky, Department of Computer Sciences, University of Wisconsin. Essentially, all items are separately coded for recovery with associated information (word, pronunciation, meaning, example of use, source, data on source, notes) and can be treated statistically. Storage is on magnetic tapes, and input has been by scanning and by punch-cards. Only the normal difficulties have been encountered: because of machine changes at the UW computing Center, we have been forced to shift from Control Data and INFOL to Univac 1108 and COBOL. But the system is now running satisfactorily.

Use Already Made of the DARE Collection. It may be mentioned in passing that at least ten doctoral dissertations have used or are using the DARE collection as a source: Chicago (O'Cain, Frazer), Florida (Rubrecht), Massachusetts (Carlson), Michigan (Reddington), New York (Greatman), Ohio (Clark, Keenan), Texas (Boyd), and Utah (Cook). All these people were DARE FWs.

Other DARE staff members have published articles or presented papers similarly: Drs. Duckert, Hartman, Udell, Venezky, and the present writer.

DARE has also furnished tapes, QRs, and information on many subjects to interested correspondents -- among others, to Mr. R. W. Burchfield, for the second Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, England), and to Professors Pierre Michel for the American Studies Centre, Royal Library, Brussels, Belgium, and Guy Forgue, of the Sorbonne, Paris.

PHASE 2 - Editing and Producing DARE.

When completed, the Dictionary of American Regional English is expected to have two distinct parts: 1. A conventional alphabetical word-list; 2. A summary of the data from the 1,002 QRs, with some maps, made possible by computer processing.

Part 1. Each different word and phrase to be entered alphabetically. Related words may be treated together when convenient, but each will be entered separately if only to cross-refer.

So far as information permits, each entry will include:

Headword. In standard spelling. Words unrecorded before will be spelled by analogy with existing similar words.

Part of Speech. Indicated by the usual abbreviations.

Regional Range. Given in concise form here, with reference to maps or fuller detail given in Data Summary (Pt. 2).

Variant Spellings. From written sources. They will be simply listed here; quotations below will attest them.

Pronunciations. No pronunciation will be given unless it comes from an oral source, heard, recorded; none will be inferred from written sources. Broad IPA transcription will be used.

Etymology. Only the proximate source, for easy words; fuller treatment where uncertainties or alternative possibilities exist. Reference to other dictionaries when pertinent, to the Linguistic Atlas, etc.

Definitions. When there is more than one sense, definitions will be numbered and given in presumed historical order. Reference to a "defining quotation" may be used instead of a definition.

Usage Labels. Such conventional ones as are necessary; they will be placed to apply to the whole treatment or to only one sense, as appropriate. (The Data Summary's detailed treatment will give further basis for labels.)

Quotations. Taken directly from any source, dated and identified by author or speaker, book, page, etc.

Notes. Any pertinent further information, discussion, or the like.

Part 2. Data Summary. The Data Summary (DS) will list: (1) The 1,002 communities in which the QR was completed with code abbreviations. (2) The INFs who answered the QRs, with the sections they answered, their individual code abbreviations, and the biographical facts about each (education, occupation, age, sex, race). (3) A base map showing location of the 1,002

communities. (4) Each question of the QR with the answers it produced, given in descending order of frequency and correlated with the information about the INFs.

Thus the Data Summary will digest and tabulate for the Editors the greatest part of the fresh data. The treatments in the Dictionary proper will be made from the total mass of data, including the Data Summary and all other sources.